

32. HOST PLANTS USED BY BLACKTHROATED WEAVER BIRD
PLOCEUS BENGHALENSIS FOR NESTING IN SOME DISTRICTS OF
RAJASTHAN AND HARYANA

TABLE I
LIST OF AREAS STUDIED

State	District	Areas studied
Rajasthan	Alwar	(i) Alwar to Bharatpur border at S.H. 14.
		(ii) 120 ha. plantation area of Forest Deptt. near village Tatarpur (27° 54'N, 76° 53'E)
		(iii) River Sabi from village Sodawas to Sabi bridge.
	Bharatpur	(i) Alwar border to Bharatpur at S.H. 14.
		(ii) Halena to Bharatpur at N.H. 11.
		(iii) Some patches in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur.
Haryana	Sikar	(i) Ringus to Sikar railway line.
	Jaipur	(i) Kotputli to Jaipur at N.H. 8.
	Dungarpur	(i) Almost whole district.
	Mahendra Garh	(i) Area of 200 m radius around Station Mazri on Jaipur-Delhi railway line.
(ii) Rewari to Mahendra Garh railway line.		
	Gurgaon	(i) Rewari to Gurgaon railway line.

(NH = National Highway, SH = State Highway)

This note deals with a field study on the preferred plants used by the Blackthroated Weaver Bird *Ploceus benghalensis* for nesting. The preferred host plants were surveyed in the many districts of Rajasthan namely Alwar, Bharatpur, Sikar, Jaipur, Dungarpur, Chittor Garh, Banswara and two districts of Haryana, Mahendra Garh and Gurgaon.

Details of areas studied during the host plant survey are given in Table 1.

I concentrated my attention on 50 m wide strips of land on either side of the roads, railway lines and main river courses. A 50 m wide strip of land was also surveyed around water bodies. My observations are as shown in Table 2.

It is generally believed that Blackthroated Weaver

Birds use grasses and other grass like monocotyledons to hang their non — pensile nests. But in cases of scarcity of grasses and other grass-like monocots, Blackthroated Weaver Birdshang their nests on dicots also as observed near Rly. Station Mazri in Haryana. At this particular site suitable tall grasses could not be traced. It is interesting to note that at this particular site the birds hung their nests at an average height of 1 m from ground level on dicot hosts, similar to host grasses.

A detailed survey was conducted in district Chittor Garh, Banswara and Udaipur in Rajasthan but no nesting was observed.

July 30, 1987.

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TABLE 2
HOST PLANTS PREFERRED FOR NESTING BY BLACKTHROATED WEAVER BIRD *Ploceus benghalensis*

Group of plants	Family of preferred plant	Preferred plant used for nesting	No. of preferred plants/clumps used for nesting in various districts in different breeding seasons									
			Alwar		Bharat-pur		Sikar	Jaipur	Dungarpur	Mahendra Garh	Gurgaon	
			1982	1983	1987	1980	1987	1987	1987	1984	1987	1987
Monocots	Typhaceae	<i>Typha angustata</i>	1		3	-	6	-	-	-	-	-
	Gramineae	<i>Saccharum munja</i>	85	91	61	74	76	96	4	-	40	65
		<i>S. spontaneum</i>	11	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>S. officinalis</i>	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Sorghum vulgare</i>	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		<i>Pennisetum typhoides</i>	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dicots	Convolvulaceae	<i>Ipomoea fistula</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
	Leguminosae	<i>Acacia nilotica</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
	Rhamnaceae	<i>Zizypus jujuba</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Total:	5 families	7 genera, 9 species	98	104	61	81	76	96	4	7	40	65

33. HALF-BUILT NESTS OF BLACKTHROATED WEAVER BIRD *PLOCEUS BENGHALENSIS* WITH DOUBLE CHIN STRIPS

(with two text-figures)

Half built nests of Blackthroated Weaver Bird normally *Ploceus benghalensis* and other species of weaver birds have only one chin strip, which creates two openings in the half-built nest at helmet stage. During a survey in the 1983 breeding year in Alwar district of eastern Rajasthan. I found 8 abnormal half-built nests of *P. benghalensis* in clumps of *Saccharum munja* in different localities of this district. Seven of these nests had double chin strips, while the eighth was without a chin strip.

Each of the nests with double chin strips was observed carefully. Each was formerly a normal nest with a single

chin strip, but perhaps due to rejection of the whole nest or at least rejection of the egg-chamber (partial rejection) by the female, former chin strips were darned by the cocks with the ceiling of respective nests. Simultaneously they prepared an additional chinstrip upwardly, parallel to the original chin strip to create a new egg chamber within the old nest. Once a nest is completed separate identity of primary chin strip cannot be visualized.

August 18, 1987.

SATISH KUMAR SHARMA

34. GREYNECKED BUNTING *EMBERIZA BUCHANANI* BLYTH SIGHTED NEAR UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

On the outskirts of Udaipur city, Rajasthan, is a small hill called 'Neemach Mata', which is surrounded by flat land having open scrub. We were trekking in this area on 9 April 1987 and at about 1300 hrs, we noticed a bird of

House Sparrow size silently feeding on the ground under the shade of an *Acacia nilotica* (Babul) tree. A few paces away from the bird a male Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* was feeding on the ground. The distinct style of